DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 215 SP 037 724

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TITLE Work-Related Behaviors of Elected and Appointed Local Superintendents of Education in the State of Alabama.
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Memphis, TN, November 12-14, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Effectiveness; *Administrator Role; *Boards of Education; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership Qualities; Public School Teachers; Public Schools; School Districts; *Superintendents; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Alabama; Appointive Positions; Elected Positions; Teacher Leaders; *Work Commitment

ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding the work-related behaviors of Alabama's elected and appointed local school superintendents. A mailed survey sought information on: demographics; work-related behaviors identified as essential for successful school system leadership; perceptions of superintendents' general leadership performance in the specific educational delivery system; and specific school improvement actions initiated/completed by the superintendent within the past 5 years. Participants were: (1) 80 current school board chairs of Alabama public school systems within each of Alabama's school districts that elected superintendents and appointed school superintendents and (2) teacher leaders from each of the 80 districts. Over 50 percent completed the mailed survey, with fairly equal response from the two groups. Board chairs had more positive perceptions than did teacher leaders. There was no relationship between the groups regarding perceptions of superintendents' general leadership performance. There were 23 frequently demonstrated work-related behaviors for superintendents, with appointed superintendents demonstrating them more often than elected superintendents. Elected superintendents initiated/completed specific improvement actions more often than did appointed superintendents. Both groups of superintendents had initiated/completed technology purchases, purchased new school buses, constructed new schools and other buildings, and provided instructional material and supplies to students. (Contains 17 references.) (SM)

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ED 415 215

WORK-RELATED BEHAVIORS OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA

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Presented at
1997 MSERA ANNUAL MEETING
November 12, 1997
Memphis, Tennessee

SP037724

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WORK-RELATED BEHAVIORS OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA

In today's age of accountability, the position of superintendent of schools is a position that demands unwavering courage, commitment to excellence, and effective leadership behaviors. Alabama has traditionally been at or near the bottom of most national measures of achievement in education. To raise those achievement levels the leadership behaviors must be effective across the organization, but it is critical that the superintendent possess a high degree of effectiveness in all areas. The behaviors demonstrated by the superintendent set the tone for the entire system.

The position of superintendent of local educational agencies (LEA) in Alabama is achieved in two ways. According to information provided by the Alabama State Department of Education, achievement of superintendency for 87 systems is through a selection and appointment process conducted by the local school board (B. Fannin, personal communication, September 20, 1996). The remainder of the positions (40) are achieved through election to the post by the voting public (B. Fannin, personal communication, September 20, 1996). According to the Alabama Association of School Boards, there is a common perception across the state is that there is a difference in the effectiveness of the school leadership based on the route taken to the position of superintendent (AASB, personal communication, June 10, 1996).

Although there is certainly a responsibility to respond to the demands of parents, students and the community at large, the biggest pressure for appointed superintendents is to answer to the needs articulated by the Board (C. Carrick, personal communication, May 8, 1996). The elected superintendent, on the other hand, may feel no particular loyalty to the Board of Education (AASB, personal communication, June 10, 1996). He/she stood for election in the same manner as did the board members, and the first allegiance may be directly to the public. Realizing that election time for the position of superintendent will come again in four years may influence elected superintendents to respond directly to the public rather than to the board members. The need to respond to a different set of "bosses" is just one area of difference between elected and appointed superintendents that may affect their work-related behaviors.

Superintendents historically have been prey to community pressures, and both elected and appointed superintendents receive pressure from varying sources. Bruce (1895) wrote "The superintendent's position is a difficult one. He is a ready target for unreasonable parents, disgruntled teachers, and officious school board members" (Myers, 1992, p. 96). Reaction to the pressures of the position will be evidenced in the behaviors demonstrated and functions performed by the superintendent. These behaviors may be indicative of how the superintendent achieved the position, whether by election or appointment.

Guthrie and Reed (1986) said that "School administrators are expected to provide leadership in important educational endeavors such as goal setting, organizational planning, guiding instruction, implementing curriculum changes and evaluating personnel,

while simultaneously managing concrete activities such as transportation, facilities, maintenance, and food service" (p. 196).

Rothstein (1986) identified the tasks or work-related behaviors of school leaders as the following:

1. Initiating behaviors - identifying problems and proposing solutions, new ways to do things, organizing individuals and resources in new way.
2. Information-seeking behaviors - asking others to clarify intentions, feelings, ideas.
3. Information-giving behaviors - illustrating points, using own experiences.
4. Opinion giving behaviors - giving own opinion when needed.
5. Elaborating behaviors - clarifying intentions and communicating using examples to develop meaning.
6. Coordinating - showing followers how different ideas or suggestions relate to one another.
7. Summary statements - bringing together ideas of similar content, themes, etc.
8. Feasibility/Testing - applying thoughts to real situations.
9. Evaluating - measuring group decisions against group standards.
10. Diagnosing - identifying sources of difficulties, next steps, problems to be solved (p. 187).

Gousha (1991) in his "Analysis of Selected Competencies: Components, Acquisition and Measurement Perceptions of Three Groups of Stakeholders in Education", identified 12 core competencies for school administrators. His competencies included the following:

1. clarity of values and integrity
2. communication skills
3. critical thinking skills
4. ability to learn from experience
5. cultural sophistication and cross-cultural understanding
6. empathy and respect for others
7. loyalty and intimacy beyond tolerance
8. sense of self in a social and historical sense
9. understanding of relevant critical and political issues
10. technical skills related to personnel and organizational management
11. creative ability to incorporate new research and information from various fields
12. foundational knowledge base (p. 20)

A number of researchers and organizations have developed lists of indicators, behaviors, competencies and functions that effective school administrators should exhibit. Review of a number of these indicate a common core of competencies that appear in many studies, documents, and reports.

The State Department of Education for the State of Alabama(1991), developed a list of competencies, indicators and definitions for superintendents. This document includes those common competencies identified by research. The following nine responsibilities for superintendents are listed in that document:

1. Serves as Chief Executive Officer of the School Board
2. Provides Educational Leadership of the Schools

3. Responsible for Personnel Management of the Schools
4. Responsible for the Financial Management of the Schools
5. Responsible for Community Relations
6. Responsible for Management of School System Resources
7. Responsible for Communications and Interpersonal Relations
8. Provides Model for Professional Development and Leadership
9. Performs Professional Responsibilities.

Behaviors/tasks/functions to be performed by Alabama superintendents as identified in the "Competencies, Indicators and Definitions for Superintendents" include the following:

1. Recommends actions to the school board and implements policies of the school board.
2. Reports to the school board the status of programs, personnel and operations.
3. Performs duties as chief executive officer
4. Communicates vision/mission to staff, students, and parent/guardians.
5. Provides for supervision, evaluation and professional growth of all personnel.
6. Supervises the planning, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum and instruction.
7. Establishes goals for student achievement.
8. Develops and implements a comprehensive personnel plan.
9. Assigns, orients, and inducts personnel to schools and offices
10. Seeks sufficient funding for school system

11. Prepares budget.

12. Ensures compliance with federal, state and local laws and policies.

13. Establishes and maintains procedures for procurement and fixed assets control of equipment and supplies.

14. Develops and implements a system wide plan for community relations.

15. Utilizes local media in community relations.

16. Models positive community involvement.

17. Manages school facilities.

18. Manages pupil personnel services.

19. Implements policies and programs relating to student conduct and discipline.

20. Ensures the health and safety of students.

21. Speaks clearly, correctly, and coherently.

22. Writes clearly, correctly, and coherently.

23. Establishes effective communication processes and interpersonal relationships.

24. Improves professional knowledge and skills.

25. Takes a leadership role in improving education.

26. Implements federal, state and local laws, policies, and procedures.

27. Performs duties in an effective manner.

Effective educational leaders are crucial to the achievement of students. In Alabama the leadership of school districts comes from either appointment or election to the post. It is important to know if the method of acquisition is correlated to the degree of effectiveness exhibited by the appointed and elected superintendents through their work-related behaviors.

Statement of Problem

A review of the literature indicates that no studies have been conducted regarding the work-related behaviors exhibited by Alabama local school superintendents relative to the method by which they assumed their position as superintendent. Studies relative to comparisons of elected and appointed superintendents have not been conducted utilizing the perceptions of subjects such as board chairs, teacher leaders or government leaders.

Some studies have been conducted regarding the selection of superintendents in Alabama. Fanning (1989) in his "An Analysis of Those Factors Which Influence the Selection of Appointed Superintendents of Education in the State of Alabama" reported only on appointed superintendents. Holmes (1992) conducted a study of the self perceptions of elected and appointed superintendents in Alabama regarding their leadership style, leadership range, and leadership adaptability. Conway (1995) studied the specific job functions of superintendents in five southeastern states, the only remaining states that had both elected and appointed superintendents at the time of his research.

There should be more research in the area of work-related behaviors exhibited by elected and appointed superintendents in Alabama school systems as perceived by those groups which work closely with the superintendents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding the work-related behaviors of Alabama local school superintendents. School board chairpersons are in a position to observe the behavior, decision making, and general effectiveness of the superintendent, and, as part of their duties, annually evaluate the superintendent of their district. Their input helped to

discriminate work-related behaviors for Alabama superintendents and to discriminate differences between the appointed and elected superintendents.

Teacher leaders work directly with superintendents through the implementation of the instructional program of a school district. Additionally, they are often involved in decisions regarding policies and practices affecting personnel in the school systems. Because of their unique position as subordinates, they have first-hand information about typical job-related behaviors of their superintendent.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1. There shall be no significant difference ($p < .05$) in the responses of subjects regarding the specific work-related behaviors practiced by appointed and elected superintendents.

Null Hypothesis 2. There shall be no significant difference ($p < .05$) in the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding the work-related behaviors demonstrated by superintendents.

Null Hypothesis 3. There will be no significant difference ($p < .05$) in the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding the general leadership performance tasks that have been initiated/completed under the direction of their superintendents.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. What are the most frequently practiced behaviors by elected and appointed superintendents?

Research Question 2. Will the responses of the subjects reveal that superintendents demonstrate those work-related behaviors that are identified as desirable by the authorities?

Research Question 3. Will respondents identify a higher number of educational improvement actions as having been initiated/completed by elected or appointed superintendents?

Research Question 4. What specific educational improvement actions were initiated/completed by elected and appointed superintendents?

Significance of the Study

Currently, there is little or no research available to provide information on the differences in elected and appointed superintendents relative to work-related behaviors demonstrated by each. Decisions made by these school leaders directly impact thousands of children and adults in Alabama annually. It is important to determine if there is a difference in the behaviors exhibited by the elected and the appointed superintendent in Alabama school systems.

Perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding school district superintendent behaviors provided valuable information for school boards and citizens across Alabama. The implications of the study are as follows:

1. The study identified work-related behaviors of superintendents that could indicate successful leadership for Alabama public schools.
2. The study discriminated the behaviors of superintendents relative to their achievement of the position.

3. The study identified specific general leadership areas which needed improvement.

Methodology of Study

For the purpose of conducting this study, a number of separate activities were conducted. The specific activities which were conducted included the following:

1. A comprehensive review of literature on the subject of the superintendency was conducted.
2. A survey instrument was developed as a result of information gained from the review of literature.
3. The reliability and validity of the instrument were obtained through pilot testing of the instrument and through the review of the instrument by a panel of experts in the area of school supervision and instruction.
4. The population and sample to be included in the study were identified.
5. The instrument was distributed to the selected sample.
6. The data received using the survey instrument were analyzed through the use of appropriate statistical techniques.
7. The results were summarized and reported.
8. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations were presented.

A comprehensive review of literature on the subject of the superintendency was conducted. Specific focus was placed on the effective and desirable work-related behaviors demonstrated by school leaders. Other areas of the literature search focused on identifying the most critical work-related functions for school superintendents. Additional

review was conducted on the history of the superintendency and the development of appointed and elected superintendents and the perceptions of effectiveness of each.

The survey contained questions and statements designed to obtain information concerning the research questions and hypotheses. Items were formatted to seek responses through the use of a Likert-type scale.

A panel of experts in the field of school supervision and instruction , and government leadership were used to conduct a test of validity. Experts included subjects who were currently serving or had served within the last five years in positions of school board chairs, teacher leaders, or government leaders. A100% return rate on the appropriateness of items was received. The expert panel judged the instrument to be valid based on its clarity, relevance, and general usefulness relative to identifying the work-related behaviors of Alabama school superintendents.

To determine reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with 24 randomly selected subjects from the three sample groups. As a result of the pilot study, the government leader group was excluded from the main study. The return rate was less than 1% for this group of respondents, and their responses were primarily "Don't Know."

The sample for the research study was selected from the two remaining populations. The first group consisted of current school board chairs of Alabama public school systems. The second group consisted of teacher leaders. Subjects from among school board chairs were purposefully selected from each of the 40 school districts in Alabama that elect the superintendent. Additionally, 40 board chairs were randomly selected from the 87 systems that appoint school superintendents. Random selection was continued until there was an equal number of board chairs representing elected and

appointed superintendents. The selection process was randomly conducted until subjects were matched based on the general demographic characteristics of the school system. The Cluster System designed by the Alabama State Department of Education was used to achieve this match.

This Cluster System groups school systems by socioeconomic indices and by size based on enrollment. Socioeconomic indices include the number of free and reduced student meals reported in the system, and the number of dollars generated by ad valorem mills on property in the city or county. These indices are indicated through a numerical grouping from 1-4. The most affluent is indicated by l, while 4 indicates the least affluent. Size is divided into two categories - Large and Small. Large is over 5,000 students and Small is under 5,000 enrolled students. For example, a system in category 4L is a large system that is very poor. The fallacy of this Cluster System for the study is the absence of any elected superintendent system in the 1S category. All superintendents in this category are appointed. Using the Cluster System enabled the researcher to match the remaining 40 systems demographically.

The second group of subjects was selected from the teacher leader population. The president of the local Alabama Education Association affiliate for each of the 80 systems in the study was purposefully selected based on their position as leaders for the local professional organizations.

The study was stratified by appointment of superintendent and by election of superintendent, and further stratified by school board chairs and teacher leaders. The total population surveyed numbered 160 possible respondents (80 board chairs, 80 teacher leaders).

The data from the survey were collected, scored, and analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data for research questions. Inferential statistics were used to assess the perceptions of the respondents. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test procedures and chi-square procedures provided by the Research Assistance Center at The University of Alabama. The results were recorded in narrative and tabular form. Conclusions were drawn according to the survey instrument's reliability and results of the data obtained.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders of selected public school systems in Alabama.

2. Although research subjects should be knowledgeable in recognizing and identifying desirable work-related behaviors of superintendents, their responses are subject to interpretation and personal bias.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions for this study were as follows:

1. The completion of the survey was dependent on the willingness of respondents to give honest and sincere perspectives.

2. The perceptions of the subjects are significant with regard to the identification of work-related behaviors demonstrated by elected and appointed superintendents of local schools in Alabama.

Review of Related Literature

A review of related literature included focus on historical information, leadership, duties, responsibilities and functions of superintendents, elected and appointed

superintendent states, and support for electing versus appointing local school superintendents. The following is a synopsis of the review.

1. **Creation of the Superintendency** - Early superintendents served primarily as representatives or assistants to the board of education which was comprised of local lay persons who supervised the schools. As early as 1804 the term "superintendent" was used, and by the 1830's it had become a common term for the leader of local schools.

2. **Leadership Indicators of Superintendents** - A plethora of definitions, descriptions and characterizations have been used to identify the essence of leadership. The most often observed ingredient involves an influence process that is exerted by the leader over followers.

3. **Duties, Responsibilities, and Work-Related Functions of the Superintendent** - Numerous duties, responsibilities, and functions of the superintendent are identified in the literature. The key function may be coordination (Fensch and Wilson, 1964), communication (Dunigan, 1980, Pinter and Ogawa (1981), or management (Cuban, 1984). Hoyle (1989) posited that the 21st century superintendent must possess human skills, technical skills, and conceptual skills. Thomas E. Glass (1992) identified mentoring, discrimination, hiring, minorities, change agentry, and moving and shaking as critical characteristics. Superintendents themselves listed human relations adeptness, data management and technology awareness; financial skills, knowledge of social and education reorganization processes; other

conflict management skills; political skills, and research ability. (Cuningham and Hentges ,1982). The Alabama State Department of Education (1991) developed the following list of competencies for superintendents: Chief executive officer of the school board; educational leadership; personnel management; financial management; community relations; resource management; communication and interpersonal relations; professional development leadership; and, professional responsibilities.

4. **Elected Superintendents Versus Appointed Superintendents** - Schuh and Herrington (1990) found that proponents of superintendent election assert that the process maintains public control of schools, is more responsive to citizens' needs, and decreases high turnover and abuses of power. Those in favor of appointment point to the school board's personnel selection qualifications, the efficiency of the decision-making process, and the creation of a professional rather than a political process.

5. **States Which Elect Public School Superintendents** - Only fours states continue to elect public school superintendents - Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

6. **Support for Appointing District Superintendents and Support for Electing District Superintendents** - The issue can be summarized as a contrast between having access to a larger pool of more highly qualified candidates and direct public control of the school.

Description of the Survey Instrument

Data were gathered using a survey instrument derived from the review of literature and developed by the author of this study. The survey instrument consisted of four specific sections. Section One of the instrument sought demographic information. Section Two of the instrument was divided into eight subsections. Each subsection identified work-related behaviors that authorities have identified as essential for successful school system leadership. This section consisted of 32 items. These items were designed to use statements that required responses through the use of a Likert-type scale – Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never, and Don't Know (A, U, S, N, DK). Items from these sections provided the data for the analysis for Hypotheses 1 and 2 and Research Questions 1 and 2. Section Three sought the responses of subjects relative to their perceptions of the genral leadership performance of the superintendent in specific educational delivery system areas. Respondents were provided three choices of responses. These choices were Yes, No, Don't Know – Y, N, DK. Items 33-39 on the instrument provided data for this section. Items from Section Three provided data for the analysis of Hypothesis 3. The final section (Section Four) of the instrument requested that respondents identify specific school improvement actions initiated/completed by the superintendent within the last five years. Respondents simply placed a check mark beside those actions listed on the instrument. Items from this section were used to respond to Research Questions 3 and 4.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The instrument was subjected to a review by a panel of judges. Each of the five judges possessed one of the following credentials: (a) experience as a superintendent, assistant superintendent, school board member, or teacher leader; and, (b) active in one of

these positions during the past five years. The instrument was found to be valid based on clarity, relevance, and general usefulness relative to identifying the work-related behaviors of Alabama school superintendents.

A pilot study was conducted to establish reliability of the research instrument. A group of 24 persons who possessed experiences similar to those of the subjects was selected for this activity. The pilot study established the reliability of the of the items on the instrument by using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1992). A 78% return rate resulted in a Cronbach Coefficient Alpha for RAW variables at 0.969271 and for standardized variables at 0.971563, indicating a very strong positive relationship.

A cover letter, survey instrument, informed consent form, and a pre-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to each member of the sample population. A return rate of 58% was achieved. Data were collected, scored, and analyzed. Approved statistical techniques and procedures including t-test, chi-square, percentages, and frequencies were used to analyze the data.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Demographic Findings and Conclusions

Demographic Findings

1. A slightly higher number of school board chairs responded to the survey than did teacher leaders. The return rate for board chairs was 60%, while the return rate for teacher leaders was 55%.
2. County school systems accounted for 15% more of the responses than did the city school systems.

3. Respondents representing school systems with fewer than 5,000 students accounted for 61.5% of the return. Systems with enrollments between 5,000 and 10,000 students equaled 30.8%. Only 3.3% of the systems had enrollments between 10,000 and 20,000; and only 4.4% of the systems had enrollments of more than 20,000 students.
4. Appointed superintendents accounted for the majority of responses at 57.6%.
5. An overwhelming majority (94.5%) of superintendents are male.
6. Length of service for superintendents was fairly equal from 3 years or less up to 10 years, with 87% in this category.
7. The majority of superintendents in this study hold either a specialist or doctorate degree. Of the 33 reported doctorate level superintendents, only three are elected superintendents.

Conclusions

Based on the results of analysis of the findings related to demographic data, it was concluded that school board chairs are only slightly more likely to respond to survey materials than are teacher leaders. Subjects from county school systems are more likely to respond to survey materials than are subjects from city systems. Most of the school systems represented are small systems and have an appointed superintendent. An overwhelming number of superintendents are male and have served from one to 10 years. A majority of superintendents hold advanced degrees, and most appointed superintendents hold a doctorate degree.

Null Hypotheses' Findings and Conclusions

Hypothesis 1

There shall be no significant difference in the responses of subjects regarding the specific work-related behaviors demonstrated by appointed and elected superintendents.

A t-test procedure was used to analyze Hypothesis 1.

Findings

A significant difference was determined to exist between the responses of subjects regarding the specific work-related behaviors demonstrated by appointed and elected superintendents. The group represented as elected superintendents had a mean of 94.49, and the group represented as appointed superintendents had a mean of 109.25. This result indicates that respondents perceive the appointed superintendent as demonstrating a higher number of desirable work-related behaviors than they perceive the elected superintendents as demonstrating.

Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Hypothesis 1, it was concluded that perceptions differ regarding work-related behaviors of appointed and elected superintendents.

Hypothesis 2

There shall be no significant difference in the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding the work-related behaviors demonstrated by superintendents.

A t-test procedure was used to analyze Hypothesis 2.

Findings

A statistically significant difference was found between the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding work-related behaviors demonstrated by superintendents. Alpha equaled 0.0002, which is less than 0.05, the identified probability value for analysis.

Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Hypothesis 2, it was concluded that board chairs have a more positive perception regarding the work-related behaviors demonstrated by superintendents than teacher leaders have.

Hypothesis 3

There shall be no significant relationship between the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding the general leadership performance tasks that have been initiated/completed under the direction of their superintendent.

Chi-square procedures were used to analyze Hypothesis 3.

Findings

1. A relationship was found in two areas--job descriptions for every position, and capital improvement as a top priority for the school system.
2. The remaining six areas did not show a significant relationship between the groups and their agreement on general leadership performance.

Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Hypothesis 3, it was concluded that no significant relationship existed between the groups relating to general leadership performance of the superintendent.

Research Questions' Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1

What are the most frequently demonstrated work-related behaviors by elected and appointed superintendents?

Frequency and percentage techniques were utilized for research question analysis.

Findings

1. Of the 33 work-related behaviors, 10 behaviors were identified as being demonstrated less than 80% of the time.
2. Those behaviors were identified in the following categories: Promotes Student Growth, Fosters Positive School Climate, Provides Leadership, Leads/Manages Personnel, and Promotes Community Relations.
3. Of the 33 behaviors, appointed superintendents were perceived as demonstrating the following 23 behaviors frequently:
    a. Reviews reports on student achievement, attendance and graduation;
    b. Assesses and sets priorities on student needs;
    c. Articulates/disseminates high expectations for student learning and teaching quality;
    d. Promotes academic rigor and excellence for staff and students;
    e. Encourages and fosters self-esteem in staff and students;
    f. Provides direction and support for periodic review of curriculum;
    g. Provides direction and support for periodic review of school policies and procedures;

h. Develops and offers opportunities that respond to teacher needs for professional development;

i. Encourages and facilitates the use of new technology to improve teaching and learning;

j. Defines and delegates administrative authority and responsibility to certified and non-certified personnel;

k. Complies with all applicable personnel policies and rules;

l. Prepares appropriate budgets and cost estimates;

m. Maintains accurate fiscal records;

n. Applies the legal requirements for personnel selection, development, retention, and dismissal;

o. Plans for facilities needs and makes recommendations for maintenance, modernization, and replacement of buildings as needed;

p. Seeks adequate funding for needs;

q. Ensures equitable distribution of resources;

r. Develops and communicates guidelines for student conduct;

s. Enforces the discipline policy of the system;

t. Promotes a collaborative approach to discipline involving staff, students and parents;

u. Interacts with the board in an ethical, sensitive, professional manner;

v. Communicates clearly and substantively to the board; and,

w. Recommends policies to improve student learning and district performance.

Elected superintendents were perceived to demonstrate only three behaviors frequently. Those three behaviors are the following:

a. Reviews reports on student achievement, attendance, and graduation;

b. Maintains accurate fiscal records; and,

c. Develops/communicates guidelines for student conduct.

Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Research Question 1, it was concluded that there are 23 most frequently demonstrated work-related behaviors for Alabama superintendents. The appointed superintendent demonstrated those behaviors more frequently than did the elected superintendent.

Research Question 2

Will the responses of the subjects reveal that superintendents demonstrate those work-related behaviors that are identified as desirable by the authorities?

Frequency and percentage methods were used to determine whether superintendents demonstrate the desirable work-related behaviors.

Findings

1. Appointed superintendents achieved more than 50% on all 33 behaviors.

2. Elected superintendents achieved less than 50% on four behaviors--Promotes and models multicultural and ethnic understanding; Formulates strategic plans, goals, and change efforts with staff and community; Recognizes and rewards exemplary performance; and, Develops and implements a system-wide plan for community relations.

Conclusions

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Research Question 2, it was concluded that Alabama superintendents do demonstrate the work-related behaviors identified by the authorities. It was also concluded that appointed superintendents demonstrate a higher number of desirable work-related behaviors than do elected superintendents.

Research Question 3

Will respondents identify a higher number of educational improvement actions as having been initiated/completed by elected or appointed superintendents?

Frequency and percentage methods were used to determine which groups initiated/completed a higher number of improvement actions.

Findings

1. Elected superintendents took specific improvement actions 64% of the time.
2. Appointed superintendents took specific improvement actions 58% of the time.

Conclusions

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Research Question 3, it was concluded that elected superintendents initiated and/or completed specific improvement actions more often than appointed superintendents did.

Research Question 4

What specific educational improvement actions were initiated/completed by elected and appointed superintendents?

Frequency and percentage methods were used to determine what improvement actions were initiated/completed by elected and appointed superintendents.

Findings

1. Thirty-four percent of appointed superintendents had constructed a new school, while 26% of elected superintendents had begun a new school.
2. Both appointed and elected superintendents achieved high scores in the area of technology purchases.
3. A 22% difference in the area of school bus purchases was observed.
4. Only 28% of appointed superintendents had constructed system buildings, but 54% of elected superintendents had constructed system buildings.
5. Fifty-seven percent of appointed superintendents provided new textbooks for all students, but only 46% of elected superintendents made the same provision.

Conclusions

Based on the results of analysis of findings related to Research Question 4, it was concluded that both elected and appointed superintendents have initiated/completed technology purchases, purchased new school buses, constructed new schools and other system buildings, and provided instructional material and supplies to students. It was also concluded that a difference exists in the frequency these behaviors are demonstrated.

Implications For Decision Making

Results of this study imply a need for additional research, and for a broader understanding of the work-related behaviors of elected and appointed superintendents in Alabama. A difference in the perceptions of school board chairs and teacher leaders regarding appointed and elected superintendents is evident. The results indicate that appointed superintendents are perceived as demonstrating more desirable work-related behaviors than are elected superintendents. Furthermore, appointed superintendents hold

higher degrees than do elected. Both groups demonstrate some desirable work-related behaviors, but appointed are perceived as demonstrating more of those identified behaviors more frequently than are elected superintendents.

All superintendents must become more committed to positive community relations and focus on strategic planning of goals and objectives. Efforts should be made to improve multicultural and ethnic understanding. A further implication of this study is that effective leaders must recognize and reward exemplary performance of subordinates. Superintendents should focus on these areas for an improved school system.

Based on the results of this study, politicians and educational leaders should be aware that the majority of local school superintendents in Alabama are demonstrating the work-related behaviors that have been identified by the authorities as desirable. They should also be aware that appointed superintendents are perceived as demonstrating a higher number of those behaviors than are the elected superintendents.

The implication for Alabama educational leaders is that a serious consideration should be given as to the advisability of continuing with the system of electing some local school superintendents. Based on the results of this study, legislators, the Alabama School Board Association, the Alabama Education Association, and other organizations committed to excellence in education in Alabama should seriously consider the abolishment of the elected superintendency.

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